

Tot Spot: A mother's journey at Up to 3

JoLynne Lyon

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Post author

Kimberlee Adams and family



Liam enjoys some

ice cream.

The following is a personal story from Kimberlee Adams, a mom whose son attended the ABC class and received early intervention services from Up to 3.

My son, Liam, has been in the Up To 3 program for 18 months now. When we first started, I cried, a lot. He had a meltdown every time any of his therapists came into our home, and he screamed at his ABC class, the entire time. He was draining our whole family. I was so grateful

for wonderful therapists who helped walk me through my journey, who held my hand and told me that it was going to be okay. I was having my own meltdowns, and with this program, I finally felt hope. There was hope for change, for understanding, compassion, love, and help. I cannot believe the leaps and bounds he has grown over the last year and a half.

I found that consistency was one of the key parts in finding change and balance in behavior. It was so hard sometimes to just be consistent, but when I was, there were miraculous changes, albeit small, but they were there. He is a creature of routine and habit, and I needed to be consistent, no matter how bad the outcome. Some days, I was just so tired of the screaming that I didn't feel like I could follow through with any of the things we had talked about in our home visit with his autism specialist, Janel Preston. She constantly encouraged me and helped me set attainable goals that she knew would help me see progress. She was incredibly understanding that I had other children I needed to care for as well, and helped give me tips for the whole family.

One of my favorite things about the Up To 3 program is that it is all about the family. They talk about how the family is affected by your sweet child's unique-ness. They offer support for everyone in the home. These amazing therapists became family to me. You know how they say it takes a village to raise a child? These women have become a part of my tribe to help raise my son and get the help he needs because no one can do it alone, and you weren't ever meant to do it alone. I love my Up To 3 family, and I will be forever grateful for all they have done for my son and for all of the progress he has made.

Janel Preston is the lead teacher for the ABC Autism services at Up to 3 Early Intervention. ABC provides training for children who may be at risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children and their families learn strategies for social engagement, language, social imitation, and play. For more information, visit the [Up to 3 website](#).